THE TRUE LIFE

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THE TRUE LIFE

A LITTLE BOOK ON GRACE

BY

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Author of "The Great Secret of the Saints"

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

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FOREWORD

Treatises on Grace have not been lacking in recent years. The demand for such food of the soul on the part of persons interested in religion is a happy proof of the truth that a large number of people are drawn to spiritual contemplation, having become weary of a practice of religion that has grown into a fixed, monotonous pattern.

If the Author has decided to contribute a further modest little work to the rich literature already extant on the subject of Grace, it is because this beautiful subject more than any other, always offers fresh beauties and a warm stimulus to the inquiring heart; this is because of the deep interest it contains for the soul of man.

These thoughts on the life of God in the heart of the Christian are here presented to the reader, not in the severe form of scientific research, but in the form of meditations for the most part culled from the works of the most important New Testament writers.

If, notwithstanding the variety of atmosphere and of the individual traits of the different writers, the

train of thought should be the same in all cases, let us not wonder at this, but rather rejoice that in all these inspired works the great lines of the holy doctrine should invariably be parallel.

May God bestow His blessing on this little work and may He move many hearts to treasure and to live the Inner Life!

THE AUTHOR

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PART I

With the Divine Teacher

CHAPTER I

A NOCTURNAL VISIT

Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and a celebrated teacher of the law, sets forth one night to visit the Divine Saviour. Dissatisfied with the interpretation of the Scriptures given in the Rabbinical Schools of Shammai and Hillel, striving after the truth and thirsting for grace, he hopes to learn from the famous Rabbi of Nazareth what he has sought elsewhere in vain.

Scarcely has Nicodemus declared his faith in Jesus as a Teacher sent by God, when the Divine Wisdom made Man permits this pious Pharisee to penetrate deep into the inner Being of the Kingdom of the Messias,—a truly wonderful privilege!

"Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." But Nicodemus is unable to understand this; in astonishment he asks: "How can a man be born again when he is old?" His mind is incapable of rising to the idea of a spiritual rebirth, which consists in the complete re-creation of the inner man. Like all those of his sect he thinks of the Kingdom of the Messias as a state of

political freedom and independence, of exterior splendor. From his youth onwards he has been accustomed to these views. Yet he should have learned the truth from Ezechiel, who speaks of a new life, founded on grace, effected by Baptism and the Holy Ghost. "And I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and I will cleanse you from all your idols. And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in the midst of you: and I will cause you to walk in my commandments and to keep my judgments and do them." (Ezechiel, XXXVI, 25–27).

Christ is astonished at this cultured Pharisee's ignorance of the Scripture. With such a lucid prophecy as this, it would seem strange that he should know nothing of the re-creation of the soul. Christ enlightens him, telling him of the spiritual rebirth which must take place in all those who want to become members of His Kingdom. Repeating His assertion, He tells him yet more emphatically: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit."

The two fundamental elements of the New Life are here brought into sharp prominence:—*Baptism*, the door to a life participating in the divine Life, which signifies that he who is baptised by the purifying waters, dies to the world and the spirit of the flesh in order to receive a completely new life; and *the Holy Ghost* as the Principle of this spiritual life of the soul.

With wonderful mastery the Divine Teacher now seeks to explain this spiritual rebirth to the astonished disciple. To do this He makes use of a simile taken from nature—a simile of the wind, which comes at will, blowing now in this direction, now in that. We can perceive its effects, its soughing, its blustering; but whence it comes and whither it goes, remains unknown to us. The simile of the wind is a very judicious one because in many languages the same word is used to designate "wind" and "spirit." The Saviour wants to bring home to this son of Abraham the fact that even as he cannot understand whence comes the wind and whither it blows, just as little can he understand whence the Holy Ghost comes and what are His aims, even while he is aware of the working of the Holy Ghost in the depths of his soul. Notwithstanding this beautifully clear simile, the teacher of the law,—clinging to the letter,—finds it difficult to imagine the possibility of spiritual rebirth.

The Divine Master does not enter into the question

how this spiritual rebirth takes place, but He reveals to His disciple the most profound and supernatural mysteries of the doctrine of grace, by showing him in luminous outline the work of the Messias in its nature and its effects. Finally, He points out to him the source of all grace,—His own death, as the Redeemer, on the Cross. He endeavors to make this clearer to the mind of His listener by referring to a well-known occurrence: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

The theology of the doctrine of grace as set forth by Our Lord in this sublime discourse, may be summed up as follows:

There is a *new life*, and it consists in the spiritual rebirth of the soul.

The *source* of this new life is the bloody sacrifice on Mount Golgotha.

The *mediator* of this new life is the Holy Ghost.

The *effect* of this spiritual rebirth is seen in spiritual change and a new moral attitude. This new life is *necessary*, since without it, no one can enter into the Kingdom of God.

Finally, in this new life there is *freedom* to enjoy the Love of the Merciful God.

Nicodemus does not yet fully understand these holy mysteries. But a new world has opened up for

him, though as yet but dimly. Meanwhile the world without has grown dark; the stars have appeared in the canopy of Heaven; and the stars of faith and charity have begun to shed their light on a human heart groping in the darkness of doubt. Deeply moved, the disciple of Moses bids farewell to the Divine Master. He is completely absorbed in the new thoughts he has received into his heart, where they glow as sparks beneath a heap of ashes. After two more Easter festivals have passed, the same Nicodemus stands at the foot of the Cross on Golgotha, of which he had heard the Divine Master speak dimly. As he looks upon the Beloved Rabbi bleeding to death, the bright stars of Faith and Love become for him a beacon of the Divine Truth and a burning torch of Divine Charity.

CHAPTER II

DIVINE FOOD FOR THE SOUL

(St. John VI)

It is late in the evening. On the Eastern shore of Lake Genesareth, in the Hauran Steppe, the Son of God has performed a great miracle: with five loaves and two fishes He has fed a multitude of several thousands, and twelve basketfuls remain over. Filled with enthusiasm at such a royal favor and such kindness to them, the satisfied crowds resolve at once to proclaim this generous Benefactor their King and Messias. "This is of a truth the prophet that is come into the world," they say. But the Divine Host is aware of their plans and, to prevent His Apostles from taking part in such an extravagant proceeding, He commands them to leave the multitude that very evening and cross the lake; while He bids the people to seek shelter for the oncoming night. He himself, according to His custom, retires to the solitude of the mountains to pray for His Father's blessing on the great work of the following day. During the night a hurricane suddenly blows over the lake, and the boat of the Apostles is tossed about like a nutshell on the

waters; in vain they struggle with the wind and the waves. All at once a mysterious form appears in the darkness and proceeds straight along the waves towards them. "It is I; be not afraid!" cries the voice of their beloved Master. Two recent events have made an impression on the Apostles which will always remain in their memory: a few hours previously they saw that Christ could miraculously multiply a few loaves; now they see His Body rise up contrary to nature, unaffected by the laws of gravity. Thus they are prepared for the great mystery that will take place soon, when Christ will tell them of His corporeal presence under the form of bread.

When at daybreak Jesus enters the synagogue of Capharnaum, He is surrounded by the multitude, some of whom had followed Him over the country, full of joyous expectation that to-day also He would relieve them of their anxiety regarding food by repeating the miracle of yesterday. But the Saviour, saddened by this material-mindedness, reproaches them: "You seek me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you."

Now when the people hear of a food that will last, not only for a few days but for ever, their enthusiasm knows no bounds, and with the simplicity of the

Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, they ask: "Lord, give us always this bread!" But Jesus puts an end to their misunderstanding by telling them: "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. But I said unto you that you also have seen me and you believe not."

The hearts of these Jews are filled with material and sensual desires. They cannot rise to the spiritual view, nor to humble faith in the Master; much less can this narrow-minded multitude grasp the further teaching of the Saviour.

He now directs their thoughts into an entirely new channel. While He has hitherto spoken to them in the present tense and His teaching has soared to the heights of faith in Him as the Messias, He now speaks of the future, promising Himself—His Flesh and Blood—as a Divine Food, by means of which He enters the heart of every believer as a new Foundation of Life. "I am the Living Bread, which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

Although there is an angry murmur of opposition among the assembled crowd, a hostility that grows louder and louder like the awful rumbling of an earthquake and spreads even to the very hearts of His disciples, not yet strong in faith,—nevertheless the

Lord continues to explain the mystery of the Bread from Heaven. He repeats what He has already said, but this time more definitely: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed." Then Jesus permits His faithful followers to glimpse the joys of Heaven and to penetrate into the sanctuary of the chosen soul, describing in a language that here reaches its climax, the divine effects of this Bread from Heaven: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."

We can picture the crowd as they quit the synagogue, embittered and disappointed; but the Apostles, impressed by the miracle they have just witnessed, remain, begin to have faith in the words spoken by the Master. And when He alludes to His ascension with His glorified Body to the Father, and to the spiritual meaning of His words,—"the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life,"—the golden rays of faith penetrate the thick veil of doubt, and Peter, in the name of his fellow Apostles, makes a sublime profession of fidelity and faith: "Lord, to whom

shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

The foregoing quoted words indisputably form the cardinal point of the whole discourse in which the Divine Saviour summarises the mighty plan of salvation: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." In this text are unfolded the three great mysteries of the Redemption—the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Eucharist, together with their significance, which consists in man sharing through these mysteries in the Divine Nature and thus, in a supernatural way, attaining to happiness. The life of the Only-begotten has its origin in the life of the Trinity ("As the living Father hath sent me,"); in time this divine life assumed a visible form through the mystery of the Incarnation in Emmanuel; and henceforward the divine life, through the Eucharist, shall continue to flow into the hearts of millions and millions of believing Christians.

For this reason the Lord laid aside, as it were, the celestial garb of His Divinity in order, as the new Adam and the Bearer of the divine life, to sink His Being into human nature; it was for this reason, too, that He divested Himself of the visible cloak of His

corporeality to assume the form of bread, that He might thus be able to bestow upon each individual heart the highest conceivable degree of intimacy with the Godhead and to implant Himself as the seed of divine life in each. Personal union with God is the object of the deepest yearning of the human heart. As the Son of God, by assuming the nature of man, united Heaven and earth, the human and the Divine, the eternal and the temporal, so, too, in the Blessed Eucharist He wishes to be the merciful bond that unites each and every soul with God. Now, in order to extend this union beyond the nature of a mere moral tie, to make it real and personal, and in order also to reveal outwardly the inner growth of grace resulting from this union, the Redeemer chooses the elements of food and drink, in the form of bread and wine, as vessels to hold His Being. As the food we eat becomes a part of us by passing into our flesh and blood, so Christ becomes united to our nature in a most intimate way. Of course, we must not ignore the great distinction that exists between our consumption of material food and our partaking of the Bread from Heaven. We should fall back into the false interpretation given by the Jews of Capharnaum and take away from the sublime idea of Christ if we were to regard in the same way the incorporation of the Blessed Eucharist, which is living and spiritual, and the consumption of material food.

"Thou wilt eat my Flesh," St. Augustine once heard a mysterious Voice say to him, as he relates in his "Confessions," "but thou shalt not change me into thee, but rather thou shalt become changed into me." (*Conf.*, I, 7, c. 10). St. Leo says: "Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ has no other end than that we should become changed into Him of whom we partake and that we should bear always in body and spirit Him in whom we die, are buried, and arise again." (*Serm.* 14 *de Pass. Dom.*)

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me." According to these words the chief aim of sacramental union with Jesus is the real and mystic union with Him in the Spirit: *de ore in cor*—from mouth to heart, as Hugh of St. Victor says. The indescribable unity of bodies must be followed by an equally sublime communion of life and spirit with the Son of God. "As Christ, by His visible entrance into the world, bestowed upon us the life of grace; so, in the words of St. John (I, 17), 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ'; and in the same way, by His sacramental intercourse, He effects a new life of grace in man: 'He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.'" (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, IIIa, qu. 79, art. 1).

According to an expression of St. Augustine that is at once profound and tender, Christ nourishes us with the milk of the Eucharist only in order that He

may thus condescend to our frailty and fill us with the Holy Ghost; and in the same way St. Chrysostom speaks of the Blessed Eucharist as the Bosom of the mystery of the Holy Ghost (*Hom. de St. Philogonis*, VII, 890), whence we should imbibe new life and grace, so that we may experience a strengthening of the inner man and become more and more filled with the complete plenitude of God and grow in Him who is the Head—*i. e.*, Christ. But all growth in virtue, every increase of grace, every advance we make in the mystic union with God, have their beginning in the increase and fortification of one fundamental force,—charity. This virtue is the magic wand that transforms us into Christ—*amor transformans;* it is the fire which consumes all that is material in the soul. Well have the ancient liturgies—thinking of the live coal with which the seraph cleansed the lips of the prophet Isaias,—named the Body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist "*pruna*," *i. e.*, "live coal," with which our souls shall be purified and recast. Hence St. Thomas Aquinas pronounces charity to be the most beautiful and the most precious fruit of this Sacrament: "Through the reception of the Eucharist not only is there an increase of grace and of the virtues, especially of charity, but above all the habit of charity becomes inflamed to activity—*caritas in actum excitatur*—according to 2 Cor. V, 14: 'The charity of Christ presseth us.' From this it fol-

lows that the soul is supernaturally refreshed by the power of this Sacrament and, as it were, intoxicated by the sweetness of divine love." (St. Thomas, *l. c.*). As under the hot rays of the sun the hard, green berries of the vine gradually become transformed into sweet, golden fruit, so the warmth of the love of Christ in the Holy Eucharist effects a change in the soul of man, making him turn to Christ in love, especially in the love that manifests itself in sacrifice; for it is the glorified Body of Christ that is mystically implanted within us, in order that our whole being, body and soul, may be offered up as a spiritual sacrifice to the Father. Sensual thoughts and acts give place more and more to the thoughts and feelings of Jesus; His truth becomes the divine light of our souls, His love the flaming torch in our hearts, until the words of the Lord become realized in their fullest sense: "He abideth in me."

"And I in him." What significant and sublime words are these! What sweetness they contain! "We are in truth the bearers of Christ!" exclaims St. Cyril of Jerusalem in holy astonishment, "receiving in our limbs His Flesh and Blood, and thus participating, as St. Peter says, in the Divine Nature!" (*Catech. Mystag.*, 4). And Christ, as He Himself has promised, remains in us, even when the sacramental species are no longer present. He remains within us as God by His divine presence through grace, He

retains for us, too, the purely human love of His Sacred Heart; therein lies a particularly sweet and loving side of the Blessed Eucharist. Holy Communion is not only the union of our souls with Christ's Divinity; it is also the intimate union of our souls with His sacred, human soul, so full of love and tender mercy, so full of grace and truth, of wisdom and knowledge, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hearts separated by time and space from those whom they love with a human love, remain near to them in spirit through memory, feeling, and will; often, the longing increases with the greater time and space and sometimes they grow sick with nostalgia. When we consider these facts, we can see how impossible would be coldness or absence of feeling on the part of the most loving Divine Heart towards our souls; for, is not the union of His Heart with ours the aim of His Eucharistic presence? Still less can we believe this coldness possible when the human heart, enjoying this divine favor, glows with responsive love for the Divine Guest. To be espoused, even in His glorified human Nature, to the believing soul was the Saviour's most profound longing: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer." (St. Luke XXII, 15). "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (St. John XIII, 1). Thus the Blessed Eucharist constitutes a lasting bond

between Jesus and the soul, a bond that cannot be loosened by exterior, material separation, but rather is drawn more closely by the intense spiritual power of love. "He *abideth* in me, and I in him."

But Jesus reveals to us yet further and more magnificent perspectives. His eye travels way beyond this temporal life into the Kingdom of His Father. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day." "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever." Partaking of the Blessed Eucharist here on earth is the type and pledge of our promised enjoyment of God in eternity. The same germ of life that is planted in the soul and nourished in this life will hereafter in the "*visio beatifica*" evolve into the life that is conformable to God. All material perceptions will be at an end, all images and representations will fade away; the divine principle of life, adhering to the soul, will in a wonderful way widen our spiritual power of understanding in the light of glory; and by this light the soul, watching and loving, shall in a great expanse of bliss embrace the indescribable Being of God. "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure. For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light." (Ps. XXXV, 9, 10).

CHAPTER III

THE JOYOUS SONG OF LOVE

(St. John XIV–XVII)

The feast at which love and intimacy reigned is over. The last sounds of the great Alleluia have died away, and Jesus rises to take leave of His faithful followers. When persons who have long been joined in true friendship are about to separate, they are overwhelmed by tender, painful feelings; if their bodies must be parted, then at least the union of their souls should be all the more ardent. Now, the Apostles believe in Jesus as the Word of God made Flesh; but their belief is not yet perfect. In their confused minds they are uncertain as to the form their relations with the Father shall take; and now, having been told that their dear Master is about to return home, they are yet more puzzled as to what these bonds shall be that shall bind them to Him to the end of time. This vague groping and seeking that goes on in the hearts of the Apostles is revealed in the petition made by Philip: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us!" (St. John XIV, 8). And the Heart of Jesus, which had just revealed itself in

an incomprehensible and adorable act of love by the institution of the Holy Eucharist, is now opened to them a second time as Christ reveals to His disciples an entirely new world, which they will understand fully only after they have received the Holy Ghost. He gives them a deep insight into the *sanctuary of grace*, into the state of man's most fervent union with God. In chapters 14–17 of his Gospel, St. John treasures up this sweet, divine message of joy as a uniquely precious jewel.

Love is the fundamental note in the Lord's farewell addresses; the theme pursued by the Divine Teacher in all its variations is: Remain in My Love, you in Me, and I in you! To give His disciples a truly sublime understanding of this divine communion of love, infinitely higher than all passing ties of earthly love, He places it in the same rank as the love that binds Him to His Heavenly Father: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." (St. John XV, 9). The same love that is the life of the Trinity is poured from the Heart of the Father into the Heart of the Son; the same love that flowed from the Eternal Word into the sacred humanity of Jesus,—this self-same love shall continue now to flow between the Messias and His followers. The relation that exists between the Son and the Father shall be imitated in the relation of the faithful to the eternal Word of God. Through the Incarnation the

Son of God made Himself a member of the human race, with whom He is mystically united. Thence His divine life became the new life of redeemed mankind. This is the highest aim of the great act of the Redemption. After the healing of the man born blind, Christ said: "I am come, that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." (St. John X, 10).

Is this threefold equation of love a valid one? Does it not sound presumptuous and fanciful to say that the Apostles—and with them all redeemed mankind,—are raised up to a divine height and dignity, the thought of which terrifies us? At first sight the words of the Saviour might be looked upon as a sweet effusion of sentimentality; actually, they let us take a glance into the abysmal mystery of grace. If the hearts of the Apostles had only shone forth in the light of a natural nobility and kindly affection for their Lord, then the comparison could never be a just one. But it is a new, supernatural beauty of the soul that radiates from the hearts of the Apostles like the sparkling of the diamond in the sunlight. For, since the disciples have gradually risen to faith in the Divinity of Jesus, and have nobly renounced the sinful, godless world; since, by instituting the Blessed Eucharist a few moments before His death on the cross, the Divine Master applied the fruit of His Redemption to them, He sees radiating from

them glorious traits of resemblance to Himself, He sees in them the reflection of His divine life in that they are children of God by sanctifying grace. Hence the comparison: "As the Father has loved me, so do I love you." And not only the Apostles, but all believers, are drawn into this sublime circle of divine communion of life. Hence, in the evening prayer of His life as High Priest, Christ petitions: "Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." (St. John XVII, 20). And now He once more raises the veil from the divine communion of Love, showing that in its essence it is a participation in the life of glory which He leads with His Father: "And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as we also are one: I in them and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one, . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me, that they may see my glory, which thou hast given me" (St. John XVII, 22–25),—a glory which the Beloved Disciple at the beginning of his Gospel designates more exactly as the two fundamental elements of the divine life in the human soul—the supernatural knowledge of the truth and the supernatural operation of love: "And we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (St. John I, 14).

The old covenant with its servile spirit of fear is now abolished, and in this hour a new covenant is formed for the disciples—the covenant of love and true friendship with God. The Apostle no longer stands to God in the relation of slave to master, but in the relation rather of friend to Friend; he opens his heart to him and entrusts Him with the secrets of his soul: "I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." (St. John XV, 15).

The Saviour's words are a revelation in which Heaven descends to crown and complete the communion of love with God already on earth;—a revelation which, as it were, draws aside the veil that hangs before the All-Holy, in order to reveal to the God-seeking heart the most profound mystery of grace. With incomprehensible benignity the most adorable mystery of the Sacred Trinity descends into the chosen soul, in order to erect within it the sublime throne of His dwelling-place, bringing a far greater wealth of grace than when He dwelt among the Cherubim in the mysterious cloud above the Ark of the Covenant: "If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will

come to him and will make our abode with him." (St. John, XIV, 23). We can picture the Apostles dumb with amazement at such a revelation. But later, when they had received the baptism of fire from the Holy Ghost, when through the self-denying life exacted by their vocation they had, after many Apostolic pilgrimages, gradually attained to a communion of suffering, and through it to the *unio mystica* with their Divine Master, the meaning of those mysterious words dawned on their souls, and they must have realized the further words of their Master with joyful hearts: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him and will manifest myself to him." (St. John XIV, 21).

It is true that also in the new order of grace charity is not excluded by obedience, nor obedience by charity. If, according to a modern authority, the innermost essence of the natural life consists in love, and if the essence of love is none other than the surrender of the will to the beloved one through service, then supernatural love, too, must be manifested and maintained by obedience to the holy Will of God. Love conditions obedience, and obedience, love. Refusal of obedience implies the absence of love, and absence of love for Jesus means separation from Him. Hence, in His words of farewell, the Saviour again and again refers to the duty of strict obedience; nay, He makes the continuance of the com-

munion of grace depend on this obedience. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (St. John XIV, 21). "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love." (St. John XV, 10). "You are my friends if you do the things that I command you." (St. John XV, 14). "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words." (St. John XIV, 24).

This communion of divine grace is more closely illustrated by the Son of God in the parable of the vine,—an Old Testament parable which the disciples understood all the more easily because they had but a few moments previously drunk from the Chalice of the Passover the mysterious blood of the vine. "I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman." (St. John XV, 1). In the mystery of the Incarnation Christ grafted Himself, the divine and glorious vine, on the tree of humanity and in this way implanted on it and its branches a new divine sap of life. "The vine and its tendrils are of one nature," says St. Augustine. "Hence it was that God—whose nature we do not share—became man in order that in Him human nature should become the vine, of which we also could be a part." (St. Augustine on the Gospel of St. John, XV). Hence it is that since that time an organic union of man with God, through the God-man Jesus Christ, is possible. And now the Lord points out the fruit and the blessings enjoyed by the

soul that remains steadfastly united to Him, as well as the destruction and ruin that await him who departs from this union. The Father in Heaven proceeds with men in a way exactly similar to that of the vine-dresser with his vines. He cuts off the dead branches, but he also applies his sharp knife to a painful pruning of the healthy, vigorous vine, to liberate it from noxious suckers and sprouts, and also that the circulation of the sap may be concentrated on the putting forth of buds. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will take away: and everyone that beareth fruit, he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (St. John XV, 2). Therefore there can never be any question of communion of life in the next world for such members as are dead in faith and love and no longer have a living, organic union with Jesus. But He also tests and purges His chosen ones by painful trials in the form of afflictions and troubles of all sorts, until the last traces of undue attachment and selfish inperfection are mortified and the union with God through grace is unclouded. But this painful pruning and purging of the tendrils is not yet enough; abundant sap must be conveyed from the roots of the vine to the branches. Without this divine life-blood flowing from his union with Christ, the disciple can never put forth supernatural fruit, the only kind that has value in the eyes of God. Though a man should succeed, by exerting the most

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ingenious powers and under the strain of iron industry, in performing work and producing results which later generations will look upon with admiration and gratitude,—yet in the eyes of God these works are worthless if their author has not lived in union with Christ: "*magnae vires et currus celerrimus, sed praeter viam,*"—glorious talents, gigantic strides, but along the path of error, as St. Augustine remarked on one occasion. (*Enarr. in Ps.*, 31). The works of man, when he relies on himself alone, spring from purely natural motives and therefore remain unprofitable before God. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither; and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth." (St. John XV, 4–6). The cement which unites God and the soul is sanctifying grace; the life-giving sap that flowed between Christ and the disciple is love; hence the earnest exhortation of the Master at the conclusion of this parable—"Abide in my love!" (St. John, XV, 9).

The Holy Ghost is the Author and Perfecter of this new state with its divine communion of life. Through Him Christ dwells in the hearts of believers even after He has left this world. What He Himself

has been to the Apostles during His stay on earth—the object of their love, their Teacher and Guide, their trusted Friend and Consoler—all this He continues to be, through the Holy Ghost, after His Ascension to the Father. He does not wish to leave His disciples behind as orphans: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever." (St. John XIV, 16). "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." (St. John XIV, 26). Therefore, He will not only be near to guard and protect them in time of need, but He will dwell within them personally; He will not come as a passing guest, to withdraw after a short visit; but He will remain with them always, until the dawn of eternal life breaks for them at death.

The power of the Holy Ghost within the hearts of men is twofold; as the living Fountain of Truth He continues objectively the teaching of Jesus in the magisterium of the Church, preserving it from error and unfolding the substance of faith according to the needs of the times; while, subjectively, the Holy Ghost makes the hearts of men receptive for the teaching of Jesus, purifies them, making their defective knowledge deep, broad, and full, causes new knowledge to spring up within them, and reveals to

them with marvellous clearness the great and profound mystery of the divine economy of salvation. Thus is formed in their hearts a firm and joyous faith: "In that day you shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." (St. John XIV, 20). Just as, when we take a perspective view from the mountains, we first see a hill close at hand, then, climbing higher, we catch sight of a village, and then a wider range of hills, until our delighted eye wanders away into the blue distance, and the whole panorama is spread before us in all its beauty; so there stretches out before the spiritual vision of the Apostles, enlightened by grace, the image of their Master, His life, works, and teaching, according to a plan not yet understood by them. They receive an insight into the full purport and essence of His new religion and recognise its chief aim—the union of the creature with the Creator through the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Enlightened by faith, they see into the inner, divine life; they see this life flowing down in three great streams from Heaven to earth: in an eternal communion of Being it flows from the Father to the Son, and thence earthward into the sacred Humanity of the Divine Word; from the Godman it pours through millions of channels into the hearts of the faithful, and thence flows back into the Bosom of the Holy Trinity. Now it is clear to them beyond all doubt that Christ is the only way to God; they understand

the final words of His farewell address: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (St. John XIV, 6). He and He alone, is the golden bridge connecting Heaven and earth; all other means of communicating with God are of no avail.

Before His departure the Master spoke of a second medium of spiritual creation in the hearts of redeemed mankind, giving it the glorious name of *Consoler*. And indeed, His followers have need of consolation in the form of abundant and effectual help. The Saviour has never hitherto alluded so emphatically to the persecution and oppression soon to break over them like a tempest; hence the loving promise of the Divine Consoler, who during those hours of suffering on Mount Olivet and Golgotha restores the equilibrium of storm-tossed hearts and pours into their burning wounds the soothing balsam of peace and joy; not the peace of a godless world which knows only a passing, spurious calm, but the true and lasting peace that comes from the consciousness of union with God: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, do I give unto you." (St. John XIV, 27). And closely related to peace there follows that sublime gift of the Holy Ghost to the soul—joy. It is true that union with Jesus implies a sharing in His suffering; but even as the sorrow in the Heart of Jesus was in the end victoriously surmounted by the joy of the Resur-

rection, similarly and to a greater degree there is a sharing in this joy in the hope of eternal happiness; the possession of God through grace is the highest happiness that can be attained in this life. As quickly as a mother's anguish gives place to joy when her child is born, so quickly, Christ tells them, the immeasurable suffering in the hearts of the Apostles will be turned into joy by the operation of the Holy Ghost; and their joy will be theirs always. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John XVI, 20–23). These holy injunctions laid by the Lord on His disciples at the hour of His departure are aimed directly at awaking in their hearts the desire for this joy of the spirit that comes from communion with God. The joy that the Son of God draws from His relations with the Father is indescribably sweet; in the same way the disciples should find joy and gladness in their intercourse with Him: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled." (St. John, XV, 11). Bound to their Master by the tie of grace, His chosen ones, even in this life, live a part of the

life eternal that will be revealed after death in the joy and glory of Heaven; then the sublime ends of the Incarnation and of the sending of the Paraclete will be attained in their fullness; then the splendor of the glorified Godman will descend upon those who are united with Him in grace: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me; that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world." (St. John, XVII, 24).

PART II

With the Disciples

CHAPTER I

WITH THE PRINCE OF THE APOSTLES

Having a presentiment that he should soon die a martyr's death, St. Peter wrote from prison during the last year of his life two pontifical letters to the young Christian communities in Asia Minor. In these epistles he earnestly warned them against insidious heresies and implored them to prepare by a blameless life for the coming of the Lord. To this spiritual testament of the first Vicar of Christ we are indebted for texts that are of exceedingly great importance for the correct understanding of the nature of grace.

The principal ground on which the first pope bases his exhortation, is the incomprehensibly great dignity of the Christian calling: "By Him [Christ] he hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter I, 4). Like the Beloved Disciple, St. Peter believes the new divine life in the soul of the Christian to be based on the idea of a rebirth: "[You are] born again not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God who liveth and remaineth for ever." (1 Peter I, 23). What does the Apostle mean by "participation in the divine nature?"

In the words of the Roman Catechism, this is "a quality of the soul that is like a ray of light or splendor which not only effaces all the stains of the soul, but renders it brighter and more beautiful than ever before." The simile chosen by the Church—that of a ray of sunlight—is a significant one. Even as the brightness of the ray of light is not the sun itself, yet flows from it, and is inseparable from it, so, too, the light of grace in the soul is an emanation of the divine light, inseparably united with it. And as the sun every year charms forth the warm spring of new life on earth, which sprouts and blossoms afresh, in the same way the supernatural ray of the divine light of grace brings forth a new spiritual spring, stirring the soul to its uttermost depths. A ray of the Omnipotence and the Wisdom and Goodness of God is shed upon every created thing in the universe, from the glorious azure of the sky and the majesty of the stars to the Alpine sunsets over the glaciers; in the kingdom of lifeless things, from the simple blade of grass to the sweet-smelling pentecostal rose in the vegetable kingdom, from the tiniest insect to the powerful lion in the kingdom of beasts; but a specially pure, holy ray descends upon man, who is the king of creation, who, by his knowledge and free will, towers above all other creatures and is a natural image of the Creator. Through grace a ray of the divine life and light enters his soul and raises it high above all the king-

doms of nature, and far above itself. For, as St. Peter writes, through grace man, partaking of the Divine Nature, is imbued with a new and divine life, —of which hitherto there was no trace in him,—a life that fills his soul and brings it into a most intimate communion with God.

Taking as their foundation the above words of St. Peter, the holy Fathers of the Church, especially the Greek Fathers, such as Basil, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Athanasius, extol in boundless terms the graces accruing from the Incarnation of the Son of God, who became a Child of man for no other purpose than to watch over us children of men and to make us children of God and His own brothers. They make use of all possible similes and metaphors to demonstrate the glorious mystery of the Light of God within us. Thus the great St. Athanasius compares the Divinity to a seal that leaves its impress on soft wax; and again to balsam that imparts its perfume to any object that comes in contact with it. St. Basil compares the soul to black, cold, and unyielding iron, which when permeated with the heat of the fire, assumes the form of the fire itself, becoming bright, hot, and pliable.

When we come to define more closely the character of the divine life in us, we have to avoid two heretical views, one of which *overestimates* while the other *underestimates* grace. The first error includes those

systems which, confounding idolatry with adoration, teach that the human soul changes its substance and thus loses its identity in the Creator. This was the error of many pantheistic mystics of the Middle Ages and is propagated in modern times by the adherents of Theosophy and Anthroposophy, who convert theosis into apotheosis. The Fathers and doctors of the Church hold that man through grace, shares in the Divine Nature, but not that he becomes God. Only One bore the human nature while at the same time possessing the fullness of Divinity because He (Christ) through the Hypostatic Union united in His own Person the divine and the human natures. He it is whom the Church in her creed addresses as God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of the Father and the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On the other hand it implies an underestimation of the divine origin and character of sanctifying grace to assume that the communion with God which it brings about is only a kind of benevolent friendship and juridical adoption of man by God, or, on the side of the Christian believer, a fervent and constant effort to live as pure and perfect a life as possible. According to the distinct teaching of the Church, the supernatural life of grace imparts a new, spiritual existence, not merely a moral quality, but uplifts the creature into an order of life far transcending all

created things, and therefore fundamentally different from a merely passing religious exaltation, or a high ethical disposition of the mind, or a purely moral union with God. The Council of Trent announces with infallible authority that sanctifying grace inheres in the soul,—an expression which we would have to twist out of its patent meaning were we to regard grace as anything else but a special state of the soul. The historian of the Council remarks that when the wish was expressed to have grace defined more exactly as a true state of the soul, the Fathers replied that this was adequately expressed by the word "inhere."

St. Augustine beautifully expresses the meaning of the supernatural life in the following brief but graphic phrase: "It is a twofold life:—the one corporeal, the other spiritual. But as the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of the soul." (*Enarr. in Ps.* LXX, Serm. 2, N. 3).

This elevation to the state of divine nobility alters nothing in man's nature. Even the Christian and the perfect saint remains entirely human. Grace does not destroy, but ennobles and purifies nature. Man retains the inherent weakness of his nature and groans under the weight of concupiscence. But since, according to the law of reason, the flesh should be the servant of the spirit, so too, according to the law of God, the spirit must be the servant of grace, by which it is guided towards God. "He that loves the earth

is earthy," St. Augustine once remarked. "He that loves God,—how shall I express myself, my brethren? Nay, not I, but the Word of God shall tell you,—he that loves God becomes godlike; for you are gods and the sons of the Most High." (*Tract. in Ioa.*, II, 14; cfr., *Serm.*, 121, 96, 1). Nevertheless, amid the constant struggle and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost a harmonious union develops between nature and grace, and progress in the life of grace spells advance in the direction of a purely natural ethic; while, conversely, becoming purified from the dross of nature and striving to attain perfect humanity in the natural sense, holds concealed within it advantages to the spiritual life. This fact disproves the reproach that the life of grace is hostile to culture.

Notwithstanding this close relation to the natural powers of the soul and their activities, the supernatural life, in the eyes of the Apostle, towers high above all that is earthly. For the divine life has been purchased with the precious Blood of Christ. It is as though St. Peter took a pair of scales and placed in one gold and precious stones and all the splendors of the earth, and in the other the divine life of grace bought with the Blood of Christ. Light as air the former scale flies up; for to the Prince of the Apostles, material riches are no standard with which to measure the riches of Heaven: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or

silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." (1 Peter, I, 18).

Hence the chief anxiety of the first shepherd is that his young Christian flock should advance in the new divine life. The great supernatural *gift of grace* implies a task no less great; the unmerited possession of the supernatural life demands spotless conduct.

In the lowest organisms two factors are essential to favorable development—light and warmth. Now, in the light of faith and in the warmth of charity there is created in the heart the atmosphere in which the new life thrives best. Therefore, the significant words regarding participation in the Divine Nature are preceded by the Apostolic exhortation: to grow "in the knowledge of Him who hath called us by his own proper glory and virtue." (2 Peter I, 3). The sacred writer here wisely refrains from using the word "knowledge in its ordinary sense, γνῶσις, but rather employs the nobler word ἐπίγνωσις, to indicate his earnest desire that the faithful should become more and more impregnated with the holy mysteries, viewing more and more clearly their inner relation to one another, and, embracing them joyously, make of them a sovereign and transforming principle of their natural life. Such a lively faith will become the fountain-head of a joy that will conquer the

world. "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love; in whom also now, though you see him not, you believe and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and diligently searched, who prophesied of the grace to come in you." (1 Peter I, 8–10).

Such faith is the eye of the soul endowed with grace, which in this life penetrates,—as through a veil, it is true,—the glory of Heaven. If the eye were not sun-like, it could never look upon the sun; if the strength of grace were not in us, how could the things of Heaven delight us? Through faith we are preserved for a happiness that will be manifested on the Last Day at the coming of the Lord; through faith we have the hope of an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance that cannot fade, reserved for us in Heaven. (1 Peter I, 4, 5).

Every form of life upon the earth demands a convoy of strength in the form of nourishment; it is similar with the supernatural life of grace. St. Peter calls it the spiritual milk that we should desire "as newborn babes desire the rational milk without guile," that thereby we "may grow unto salvation." (1 Peter, II, 2, 3). If this refers first of all to the whole economy of salvation, as it operates in sermons

and in the spirit of prayer of the young congregation, the notion of "food for the soul" can nevertheless be taken in a narrower sense and is taken by some Doctors of the Church to mean the Eucharistic Banquet,—all the more because in the time of the Apostles the Blessed Eucharist was always given on the occasion of Baptism. The chief shepherd must have had before his mind that glorious promise of the Master made in the Synagogue of Capharnaum, when in the name of his fellow-Apostles he crowned the Word of God regarding the Divine Food by a fervent profession of faith. Through this sweetest and most wonderful of all mysteries the Christian enters into a true, corporal union with his God; when he partakes of this holy nourishment, the Sacred Blood of Christ flows like a stream of fire through the veins of the soul, in order to raise it to a unity with the divine life; for, as St. Augustine so profoundly says, we do not change this Food into our substance, as we do ordinary food, but rather this Divine Food changes us into itself; no other mystery includes all the mysteries of the Incarnation, and the Redemption, the Resurrection and the Divine Glory, as well as the eternal high priesthood in one focus as does this mystery of the Blessed Eucharist; nowhere does the soul feel the truth of St. Peter's words so keenly as she does here.

But Peter would not be the rock and the chief shep-

herd if his concern for advance in the divine life extended to a few faithful Christians only. His thoughts regarding the effects of grace broaden his Apostolic heart, his eye penetrates into the most distant lands and times. He sees the divine life of innumerable souls organically united into one common life; he sees, too, rising up over the whole world, the divine structure of the great, holy Church, of which Christ is the Foundation and the Cornerstone. The lesson that Christ impressed on His followers when he bade them farewell before His Passion, speaking to them of the Vine and its branches; the lesson inculcated by St. Paul in his simile of the body and its members;—the same Catholic thought is expressed by St. Peter in his metaphor of the building of the House of God. The stones of this temple are those who, quickened by grace, build themselves on Christ. Through Him they offer spiritual sacrifices in the new temple; they are a kingly priesthood, a chosen race, a holy people, because from the Eucharistic sacrifice within this spiritual temple, unction, sanctification and consecration flow upon all who are inserted as living stones of this temple. "Unto whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honorable by God: be you also living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to

God by Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter II, 4–9).

CHAPTER II

WITH THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

St. Augustine in his exposition of the Gospel of St. John refers to its author as the theologian among the Apostles and the Eagle among the Evangelists. Clement of Alexandria calls this the inspired Gospel and Paulinus of Nola honors it with the title of "the crown and key of evangelistic literature." Even modern writers designate it as the most wonderful of all religious books. The chief cause of the pre-eminence of the last Gospel over the Synoptics is that it is permeated by a deep fervor and great love of Christ. St. John paints the figure of Christ in strong, luminous colors and shows the glory of His Divinity in a more brilliant light than the other Evangelists; he gives us most of the words spoken by Jesus, especially those revealing the most intimate and sublime mysteries of the soul. John was the "Beloved Disciple," who leaned on the Breast of the Master and who bore, deeply and indelibly engraved on his contemplative soul, every word that came forth from the divine lips; while at the same time his intimacy with the Virgin Mother—whose adopted son he became when Christ decreed it from the Cross—gave

him a deeper insight into the mysteries of the inner-divine life and especially into the mystery of the Incarnation. To his prolific pen we owe, in a certain sense, a terminology in which is condensed all that, through abundant graces, St. John has himself felt and experienced.

To be *born again* from God. Like Nicodemus, John, too, may at first have found these words enigmatical; but the weighty, significant thought underlying this phrase never left his mind again. Rising eagle-like, at the beginning of his Gospel, to the celestial heights of the inner-divine life, he joins to the great idea of the divine procreation that of the creation of grace in the human heart. The Christian born again in Christ, in a higher, godlike spirituality, through grace becomes a son of the Heavenly Father and a brother of Christ, that he also, like Christ, may be dependent on the Father in true, childlike love, suffused with His light, and inflamed with His charity. The actual purpose of the Incarnation was to impart this new divine life to us: "God became man in order that man might become like unto God," is a regular text of the Fathers. His life "was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him

not. . . . But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John I, 4–14).

Thus it is that you, O Christian soul, through being born again in grace, have been raised up far above all possible material gifts and rejoice in the indescribable privilege of being made a new creature of a higher kind. To describe this wonderful elevation of the soul to a new state there is no better illustration than that of the physical birth of man. Even as he receives at his physical birth the conditions necessary for his natural existence and life, so the soul at its supernatural rebirth receives a spiritual, godlike nature, by means of which the Christian becomes a new, supernatural being; and like physical birth, so also spiritual birth, is preceded by fear and remorse. Further, as man retains his natural existence until death, so, too, the divine life imparted to the soul at its rebirth is not transitory, but for all time; that is, unless spiritual death occurs through mortal sin. "His seed" [that is, His grace] "abideth in him." (1 John III, 9). St. Augustine, the great authority on grace, beautifully characterises by a

sharp antithesis the natural and the supernatural birth of man: "The one birth is of the earth, the other, of Heaven; the one is of the flesh, the other, of the Spirit; the one springs from mortality, the other from eternity; the one comes from man and woman, the other from God and the Church." (*Tract. in Ioa.*, XI, n. 6).

The relation to God of the merely natural man, outside the state of grace, is that of a slave to his master. But however cordial we may imagine such a relation to be, it can never be compared to the sweet and intimate bond that unites father and son. And however kindly we may imagine the sovereignty of God watching over His creature, yet very different is the gentleness of a father towards his child and that of God towards him whom He has adopted as His own. All servile fear is excluded from this tender relationship, for "fear is not in charity, but perfect charity casteth out fear." (1 John, IV, 18). "Behold, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God. . . . We are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be." (1 John III, 1–2). Such is the joyous cry of the Beloved Apostle when he reminds his disciples of their sublime calling.

But this rebirth in God must not be understood as if the natural powers of man's mind had been altered,

as if his intelligence had become keener, or the impulses of his will stronger. Grace never destroys nature, but always builds on the existing capacity of a man's mind. The spirit of the Christian believer living in the state of grace becomes new,—not, however, in the sense of a new higher moral conduct, but in the sense of an entirely new order of life and a divine principle of life. The children of God in the natural conduct of their lives are like other men, subject to the same sufferings and frailties; in their case, too, the outer man becomes dissolved more and more from day to day, but the inner man is renewed and changed through the Spirit of God until that which is mortal is absorbed by immortality.

This divine life within us is such a precious and tender mystery of faith in the eyes of the Beloved Disciple that he never tires of referring to it in his letters; this sweet revelation has become with him the ruling factor of his Apostolic life and works, the inspired theme of his sermons and written instructions. The object and the motive of his love is God alone because of his spiritual relationship of child to father. "Everyone that loveth him who begot, loveth him also who is born of him." (1 John V, I). "Let us love one another, for charity is of God. And everyone that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity." (1 John IV, 7–8).

It is for this reason that St. John impresses most earnestly on his flock the duty of always preserving intact their faith, the foundation of the divine structure of grace. With faith "we have passed from death to life." (1 John III, 14). And "He that hath not the Son, hath not life." (1 John V, 12). "Let that which you have heard from the beginning, abide in you. If that abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning, you also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father." (1 John II, 24).

But if the inner life is to be a lasting one, then the outer life also must gradually be formed after the life of the Lord: His Truth must become ours, His life must become ours, His way must become our way. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." (1 John II, 6).

The Apostle's chief care was that the Christian believer should never forfeit the loving union with Christ through sin,—especially through sins against charity. This warning forms the cardinal point of his whole moral teaching. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." (1 John III, 15). A grievous sin committed in the state of grace appears to him so monstrous, so great a contradiction that he can find no words with which to express it. He who, while a true child of God,

sins grievously, has not yet thoroughly understood the sublime dignity of the Christian; he has never yet looked into the depths of his soul; otherwise he could not turn away from the Archetype of all that is good and beautiful. "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; and whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him." (1 John III, 6). Again he describes how the world can be overcome by him who is in communion with Christ: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but the generation of God preserveth him." (1 John V, 18). It is true that in the child of God, too, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit rages, that even into the paradise of *his* heart the living serpent of temptation finds its way, even as it approached the innocence of the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden; and that it often departs victorious also from the heart of this child of God. But what the Apostle demands is that he who has been born again through grace should resist with all the power of his will the sundering of the bond that unites him to God. From his writings can be seen the sunny heights of striving after Christian perfection to which the Apostle was led by his profound conception of the dignity of grace.

It is for this reason that the child of God looks forward with hope and trust to the day of eternity, without fear or dread in his heart. "In this is the charity of God perfected with us, that we may have confi-

dence in the day of judgment; because as he is, we also are in this world." (1 John IV, 17). According to St. John's interpretation, the true life may come before the return of the Lord; for through his adoption by God the child of grace has passed from death to life. Communion with God through grace is nothing else but the germ of happiness; and eternal life in the next world is the bud of grace that has burst into blossom and the blossom ripened into fruit. *Gloria est gratia consummata*—glory is the perfection of grace—is an axiom in theology; or, as the Prince of Scholastics expresses it, "*gratia nihil aliud est quam quaedam inchoatio gloriae in nobis;*" Grace is, as it were, the seed of glory within us. (St. Thomas, 2a 2ae, qu. 24, art. 3, ad 2). As the stream of sin flows into death, so the stream of grace flows into eternal life.

When the holy seer of Patmos speaks of the state of perfection in the next life, his language is permeated by an entrancing beauty and an eloquence that is truly sublime. These passages of his belong to the choicest gems of mysticism, and sparkle with brilliant colors of the most varied imagery; yet his language lags far behind the true, ardent perception of the saintly writer; for here also transitory things are but an image of the reality. In the Book of Life he sees, in letters of flaming gold, the names of all those that were called and chosen (Apoc. XIII, 8),

and over the heads of the children of God he sees the glorious crown of life that has blossomed forth from the grace that was given them whilst on earth (Apoc. II, 10). From its source at the throne of the Lamb, the Water of Life flows to them, like a luminous mountain stream, disappearing in the sea of eternity; the Tree of Life abounds in the richest fruit, tendering its sweet, ripe gifts (Apoc. II, 7; XXII, 2); the dim light of faith has become a ray of dazzling glory, in whose flaming refulgence the transfigured soul perceives the indescribable bliss of Heaven, for the City of God has need of neither the sun nor the moon, because God's glory shines there and its lamp is the Lamb (Apoc. XXI, 23), and the love of the bride of Christ in this life will there be made perfect and will be absorbed by the joy of the marriage feast in Heaven. Joyous songs never heard on earth, resound through the eternal mansions: "Let us rejoice; for it is the marriage of the Lamb and his bride has adorned herself." And a voice spoke to me: "Write, Blessed are they that are invited to the marriage-feast of the Lamb! And the Spirit and the bride say: Come! And he that heareth, let him say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come . . . . He that giveth testimony of these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (Apoc. XXII).

CHAPTER III

WITH THE TEACHER OF NATIONS

§ 1

From Death to Life

The richest and most profound elucidation of the divine life in the heart of the Christian is given us by the Apostle who felt the operation of grace most efficaciously in his own soul. While the other disciples of the Lord were initiated into the mysteries of the Cross gradually, it was the work of an hour with St. Paul,—the great hour of Damascus. This sudden and direct rupture with a past that held many cherished traditions and valued precepts placed him suddenly in a completely new, religious world, and caused him to go into the depths of the knowledge and greatness of God, so that he was best fitted to describe "the unsearchable riches of Christ" and "the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. III, 8, 10). He had penetrated more deeply than his fellow-workers into the abyss of misery caused by sin among the pagan nations. While his idea of the Divine Life in us agrees fundamentally with the teaching of the

other Apostles, yet his views bear a coloring and a stamp peculiar to themselves.

While in St. John's world of thought the positive idea of rebirth in God is the more apparent, we find that with the Apostle of Nations this positive idea gives place rather to the negative element in the concept of *justification*. This forms the subject of his noble Epistle to the Romans, and the following words from this Epistle have passed into the dogmatic terminology of the Church: "*Ex peccatoribus iustos fieri*—out of sinners they shall be made just." (Rom. V, 19).

This process of justification includes a twofold action on the part of God—the *forgiveness of sin* and interior *sanctification*. The former is expressed by St. Paul in his simile of putting off the old man: "To put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error." (Eph. IV, 22). "Strip yourselves of the old man with his deeds." (Col. III, 9). This act he regards as identical with the mystic death of the sinner, which he finds symbolized in the immersion of Baptism, which recalls the descent into the grave. Christ's death on the Cross and the mystic death of the redeemed sinner are correlative notions; for the former established the work of grace, while the latter applied it to the Christian's behavior. In the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans the Apostle

develops this parallel along broad lines: "We that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Know you not that all we, who are baptised in Christ Jesus, are baptised in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death. . . . Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin." (Rom. VI, 2–7).

Side by side with this negative idea of the forgiveness of sin St. Paul places the positive idea of *interior sanctification* or transformation through sanctifying grace. The mystic death of the soul means the beginning of a new, divine life or the transfer to a new state in life. To St. Paul these two ideas are inseparable; he never speaks of laying aside the old man, without in the same breath reminding his hearers of the necessity of putting on the new man: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth." (Eph. IV, 23–24). "Putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him." (Col. III, 10). And as he sees the mystic death fore-shadowed in the death of the Godman, so he sees the new life prefigured in the divine, glorified life of the risen Christ; in this way the Christian believer becomes completely incorporated with Christ. "For

we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. . . . Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ, knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God: So do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our lord." (Rom. VI, 4, 8–11).

The Apostle of the Gentiles in his epistles makes use of numerous similes to illustrate clearly the existence and nature of the divine life in the heart of the Christian. Justification he calls a new creation because it lends a new kind of existence to man. "If then any be in Christ a new creature, the old things are passed away, behold all things are made new." (2 Cor. V, 17). The whole spiritual life of the redeemed sinner is thus put on an entirely new basis,—on a divine foundation. Again, he compares the faithful to a *letter of recommendation* because they bear upon them the imprint of the Holy Ghost. "Being manifested, that you are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, and written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God." (2 Cor. III, 3).

On more than one occasion St. Paul speaks of the *stamp* or *seal of the Holy Ghost*, which makes a new

impression on the soul. Man, already belonging to God, becomes His property in a still higher degree by justification, through which he receives a new form of being. Upon those who are reborn through baptism, the Lord imprints a seal as a sign of His sovereignty, an image of His splendor, and a pledge and foretaste of the life to come. "He that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God, who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. I, 21). "Believing [in the Gospel] you were signed with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance." (Eph. I, 13 sq.). This is a favorite simile with the Apostle, which passed into general use in the first centuries. Thus the holy bishop and martyr, Ignatius of Antioch, writes that men are to be compared to two coinages—the one of God, the other of the world. Each has its own stamp impressed on it; the unbelievers bear the stamp of this world and the believers the stamp of God the Father in love through Jesus Christ. (*Ad Magn.*, V, 2).

Another favorite illustration of the Apostle is *light*. As dark night is compared with the noonday sun, so is the state of man before justification compared with his state after he has been newly fashioned in Christ. And as nothing can live in regions where there is no light, so also, where there is spiritual darkness, nothing holy or heavenly can thrive. New

life stirs in regions where there is material light; and where the light of grace abounds there will blossom forth and mature a life that is turned towards God, with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. "You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk then as children of the light." (Eph. V, 8). "Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten thee." (Eph. V, 14). St. Paul calls those who have been baptised simply "illuminated" (Hebr. VI, 4), because to him purely natural understanding bears the same relation to understanding by faith that darkness bears to light. (That we are to understand by the word "light" supernatural knowledge is clearly emphasized by Maldonatus, who explains that no passage can be produced from Holy Scripture showing *"lux"* or *"lumen"* to indicate the natural light of reason; *Comment in Ioa.*, I, 4). The use of "light" to illustrate the supernatural life of the soul was so familiar to the early Christians that Baptism, the Sacrament of regeneration, was called simply ζωτισ = enlightenment; and the Church has received this pregnant idea into her liturgy and maintained it through all the centuries. Even to-day the custom prevails on Holy Thursday of placing the lighted Easter candle in the baptismal water, so that the power of the Holy Ghost may render it effective for the regeneration of sinners; furthermore those who at Baptism are reborn as the children

of light, receive the burning candle, with the exhortation to preserve their baptismal innocence intact throughout life.

The life of the justified is to the Apostle simply "the life," so that it is often not clear whether he means by it the state of grace in this life or life in the world to come. Both, as we have seen, are essentially the same, differing only in degree, as the fruit differs from the blossom. "But God (who is rich in mercy) for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ." (Eph. II, 4 sq.). Thus, according to him, "to live is Christ," (Phil. I, 21); that is, Christ is the supernatural principle of life, its content and motive, as well as its final goal. In his Epistle to the Colossians (III, 4) he briefly designates Christ as the life of those who have arisen with Him: "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory." The presence of Christ is multiplied in the faithful through the Holy Ghost; hence life in Christ is life in the Spirit. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. V, 25). The concept of life governed the early Christian world of thought to such an extent that the Christians called themselves simply οἱ ζῶντες, *i.e.*, "the living," in contradistinction to the pagans, who were spiritually dead in the eyes of God. (Dölger, *Ichthys*, Rome, 1910, p. 168).

The intimacy of the mutual relationship that exists between God and the soul of man through sanctifying grace, is beyond the power of human understanding, nor can it be fully described in human language; according to the mystics, any attempt to penetrate the relations of God of the soul endowed with sanctifying grace, can be but a feeble attempt that lags far behind the reality. According to the Apostle, the bond of grace that unites the soul with the Most Holy Trinity shines forth in a threefold light:

1. In regard to God the Father, it is the most tender filial relationship;

2. In regard to God the Son, it is a most fervent mysticism;

3. In regard to the Holy Ghost, it is a new spiritual or pneumatic life.

§ 2

Man's Filial Relationship to God

The natural consequence of being reborn in God is the most precious of all relationships—that of child to Father. To the same extent that grace is higher than nature, the state of a child of God is superior to the servile state of other creatures towards the Creator. "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have re-

ceived the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. VIII, 14–17). "And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God." (Gal. IV, 6, 7). The Apostle intentionally adds to the Hebrew word "Abba" its translation, "Father." He desires to bring to the Christian world the revelation and joyful message that fear of God and awe of Him have passed away, and a new covenant—the covenant of love and intimacy with God,—has come, in which the child of God may approach Him who is the inscrutable with the self-same sweet name on his lips with which His Only-begotten Son addressed Him while on earth:—"Abba, Father!" In this one thought the Teacher of Nations has struck the highest chord in the gamut of spiritual joy; a sound that causes God-loving souls to tremble with holy pleasure in the consciousness: I am a child of God, not merely in a figurative sense, but in truth and very deed. If the Epistle to the Romans, this masterpiece of Apostolic wisdom and eloquence, has been called the most profound philosophy of religion and the most comforting book of consolation in the battle of life, the chief

reason for this is because the tender, sublime concept of this filial relationship of man to God, permeates the whole book like a ray of sunshine.

The character of *adoptive childhood* in ordinary life is a very inadequate illustration of what the new communion of love between God and man in sanctifying grace means. For when a child is adopted in a worldly sense, the only effect produced is a legal or moral one, and hence purely exterior, whereas, on the other hand, becoming an adopted child of God brings with it a physical change in the soul, by which it is elevated to the greatest possible resemblance to God. Through the supernatural life of grace God imprints on the soul the image of His Son and makes the soul like to Him. We put on Christ, assume His character, and imitate His divine life. "For whom he [God] foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the first born amongst many brethren." (Rom. VIII, 29).

The true relationship of child to parent, founded on physical descent, gives us a very inadequate idea of what it is to be a child of God. Man does not, through his natural birth, receive the life of his parents, but only a life resembling theirs, existing apart from and independently of theirs; but through his spiritual regeneration he receives the divine life, not separate from God, but one with Him, though limited,

of course, by the bounds of creatural existence. "But he who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." (1 Cor. VI, 17). Nevertheless, the relation of the child of grace to God is infinitely below that of the only-begotten and consubstantial Son, who from all eternity possesses the same nature as the Father. This relationship is a gift of the infinite mercy of God. It is for this reason that St. Paul, when he uses the word "Father," nearly always supplements it, as, "Father of mercies." (2 Cor. I, 3; Eph. II, 4; 1 Tim. I, 2; Tit. III, 5).

From this idea of divine sonship it follows naturally that all men who are in possession of the supernatural life, in a sense bear a family relationship one to the other. "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. II, 19, 20).

Finally a most glorious future awaits the child of God after the death of his body,—the direct communion of life with the Father in indescribable glory. "If sons, [we are] heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. VIII, 17). According to the Roman law—and it was to Romans Paul addressed these words,—adopted children inherited equally with natural children. Hence the

Apostle means that if, through grace, we have become children of God and brothers of Jesus Christ, then we shall also share in the delights of His inheritance in the Kingdom of the Father.

The dignity and right of inheritance of the children of God are interpreted very profoundly in the prayers of the Church, when, on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord (6th August), she says: "O God, who in the glorious transfiguration of Thy Only-begotten Son hast confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of the fathers, and who in the voice that came from the bright cloud didst in a wonderful manner foreshadow the perfect adoption of sons; mercifully grant that we may become co-heirs with the King of glory and partners of His glory, through the same Christ Our Lord!"

. . . . . .

The high dignity to which God has raised His child by bestowing on him the grace of divine life implies a right disposition on the part of the child—above all a tender, childlike reverence towards God. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love." (2 Tim. I, 7). "Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son." (Gal. IV, 7). Without this spirit of childlike reverence and trust man is no more than a hireling. One of the saddest things in religion is the failure of so many Christians, in their life-long striving after God, to attain to that loving,

trusting relationship of the child to its father; they think of God as being infinitely distant, often too far away to be able to form the focus of their being. Hence the doubts that assail them at every step they make; hence, too, the want of confidence in God when adversity comes their way; and when they do not understand the dispositions of His Providence, then come the joyless isolation and fear and coldness that overwhelm them when they are about to quit the world and its goods as though they were going to a kind of exile. How different is the case of the child of God! With boundless trust he places himself unreservedly into the hands of his Father, and what he cannot understand or solve, he leaves to the wisdom of God, mindful of the beautiful words of the Apostle: "To them that love God all things work together unto good." (Rom. VIII, 28). He is our Father, who loves us—when He takes and when He gives. The feeling of entire abandonment is foreign to him, for he knows he is always near to God. Often quite spontaneously—the outcome of an impulse from within,—he hastens in spirit to Him, prays and seeks counsel: thus is formed as the fundamental disposition of the soul, a vigorous intercourse with God in constant attention to His holy will and loving comprehension and enjoyment of His sacred Presence; he obeys as a matter of course the Apostle's injunction: "Pray without ceasing!" (1 Thess. V, 17). Then,

too, his daily work becomes penetrated and illumined by this holy atmosphere of the fervent and sublime spirit of filial relationship to God. As St. Paul says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. X, 31). And again: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col. III, 17). Thus the thought of being a child of God sheds a gentle light like a star over the arena of our earthly duties, imparting to them sanctity and merit. True, this divine sonship is rather imperfect here below and can at any time be lost; therefore, it is a sacred duty to increase and perfect it. As a dutiful child looks up to his father and imitates him, seeking his counsel when in doubt, we too should look to Him who is the Father of Light, conforming ourselves to the Divine Model: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children, and walk in love." (Eph. V, 1 sq.).

St. Thomas Aquinas says that one of the best proofs that we are in the state of grace is the extent to which we hold the world in contempt. (*S. Theol.*, la 2ae, qu. 112, art. 5, ad 3). The child of God always feels that he is a pilgrim and a stranger while on earth. "For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come." (Heb. XIII, 14). I want to tread this world of joys and sorrows as a

pilgrim, always ready to cross the bridge that leads to Thee, O Lord. (Eichendorff.) The Christian's whole life is centered on Heaven: he breathes the atmosphere of Heaven when he prays to his Father, in his faith he finds celestial light, in the Bread of the Most Blessed Eucharist he eats celestial food. "Our conversation is in Heaven." (Philip. III, 30). "I must be as my Father is," he says in imitation of his Divine Brother, Jesus. The Alpine dweller, when he goes through foreign lands, passes by many a fine mountain and finds no charm in it, because he possesses more magnificent sights in his home country with its gigantic, snow-capped glaciers and glorious sunsets; so it is with him who loves God; the few enticing pleasures along the wayside on his earthly pilgrimage have no attraction for him because his eye is directed towards the everlasting hills with their radiant joys, towards the Alpine heights of the life of prayer. Purer and nobler joys await the faithful believer in his true home. To him God is the great Fact before which all else sinks into nothingness; to him God is the great Reality which he meets everywhere, imparting beauty to all things.

This consciousness of filial relationship to God is the saints' most powerful motive for their contempt of the world; it is the foundation of their constancy in the love of God. As St. Cyprian writes, "He who has known himself to be a child of God will never be ex-

travagant in his admiration of the works of man; he who can be astonished at anything outside of God, falls from the height of his dignity as a child of God." *De Spectac.*, c. 9). We are indebted to that great saint and Father of the Church, Pope Leo the Great, who preached so wondrously on the mysteries of the Incarnation and Justification, for sublime words on this subject—words that the Church puts before us for our meditation at the holy season of Christmas: "Let us thank God the Father, through His Son in the Holy Ghost, who out of the great love He has borne us, has mercy on us, and when we had died through sin, gave us new life in and with Christ, in order that we should be new creatures having a new form in Him. Let us put off the old man with his ways, and after we have been allowed to partake in the birth of Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh! Know your honor, O Christian, and, having shared in the Divine Nature, take heed that through degenerate behavior you do not return to your former baseness. Consider whose Head and Body it is of which you are a member! Remember that you have been rescued from the night of darkness and placed in God's Kingdom of Light!" (Leo I, *Serm. de Nativ. Dom.*).

The proof of the true filial spirit, according to St. Paul, is a childlike obedience to the Father, when He takes the Christian into the school of sorrow. It may

become the Father's duty to punish the child; for in the best of children there is much that has to be pruned. Quite often it is the favorite children that cause their parents the most sorrow; these the Father wants to become more and more like His First-born; therefore He lays the hammer of sorrow and the chisel of suffering to their souls, in order that the image of Christ may be reproduced in them. The Apostle pursues the analogy yet farther by pointing out the right of the parent to punish his child, the earnest, yet wise and loving pedagogy of the Divine Father: "My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord; neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by him; for whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Persevere under discipline. God dealeth with you as with his sons; for what son is there, whom the father doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. Moreover we have had fathers of our flesh for our instructors, and we reverenced them: shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits and live? And they indeed for a few days, according to their own pleasure, instructed us; but he, for our profit, that we might receive his sanctification. Now all chastisement for the present indeed seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow; but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the

most peaceable fruit of justice." (Hebr. XII, 5–11).

In another epistle St. Paul, considering more closely this filial relationship of man to God, speaks of an indispensable preliminary to the position of honor held by the child of God; this necessary preparation is suffering. "If we [are] sons [of God, then] heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ; yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." (Rom. VIII, 17). Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father, entered into His glory through suffering; those who through grace are the adopted children of God, should also win the eternal crown of victory through embracing the Cross. The best source of consolation and strength for the afflicted heart is to look up to the Son of God suffering on the Cross; hence the Apostle's injunction to raise our eyes in dark hours to "Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon him that endureth such opposition from sinners against himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds." (Hebr. XII, 2–3).

But even as for the only-begotten Son of God the awful hours of suffering on Mount Olivet and His martyrdom on the Cross were followed by the bright

dawn of Easter morning amid the rejoicing of hosts of angels, so, too, for the severely-tried child of God, the Father in Heaven has prepared joys so pure and immeasurable, so transcendent and unending, that they cannot be gauged by any material standards.

§ 3

The Mysticism of Christ

From the hour in which Saul was stricken to the ground by the lightning sent by God in His mercy, Christ becomes the whole meaning of his life, the soul of his soul, the fulcrum by means of which he lifts the whole world. To him the sacred Person of Jesus Christ is not a hero belonging to the past, but a living, constant Presence, active by efficacious grace. Therefore, he rejoices in his own weakness, that the power of Christ may dwell within him (2 Cor. XII, 9), ascribing to the grace of Christ his success as a shepherd of souls and "striving according to his working which he worketh in him in power." (Col. I, 29). To him Jesus is not far away, enthroned high above the heavens, but truly present on earth, where He sets up the throne of His grace in the hearts of men, to exercise His dominion over them. The Presence of Christ is established through the Holy Ghost—"as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. III,

18). It has been made manifold on earth by the descent of the Holy Ghost.

St. Paul elucidates man's relationship to Christ by a rich variety of metaphors. He uses the parable of the olive tree to show how Christ takes up His abode in us. The chosen ones of God, hitherto sons of Adam, are grafted on the olive tree like wild shoots, and thus converted into good and noble shoots. "Thou wert cut out of the wild olive tree, which is natural to thee and grafted into the good olive tree" (Rom. XI, 24); that is, *we* cannot separate ourselves from the wild olive tree and ingraft ourselves on the noble tree; but Christ in His mercy and love can draw us to Him, plant us in Himself, and imbue us with His divine life. Thus the Christian becomes, as it were, a shoot of that mighty tree that has grown out of the pierced side of Jesus when He hung dead upon the Cross.

Henceforth Christ is his Brother. Through the supernatural life of grace the Christian attains to the closest relationship with the Godman; what He is by nature, the Christian is through grace—a child of God, hence a brother of Christ. "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren . . . and again, Behold I and my children, whom God hath given me. Therefore because the children are

partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner hath been partaker of the same. . . . Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren." (Hebr. II, 11–17). "Those whom [God] foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the first born amongst many brethren." (Rom. VIII, 29).

Our relationship to Christ is expressed yet more beautifully in a simile by which the prophets of the Old Testament describe the position of the chosen people towards Yahwe and in which the Seer of Patmos clothes his deepest feelings, namely, the simile of bridal and matrimonial love. Christ "loved the Church and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." (Eph. V, 26 sq.). The union of Adam and Eve is symbolic of the living union of Christ and His bride. This union was established in the fundamental mystery of the Incarnation; but in uniting Himself with the Church, purifying and sanctifying her, the Godman continues the mystery of the Incarnation, the union of God with man, rendering it fruitful to the end of time.

No image can show so clearly the intimacy of this

relationship of redeemed Christendom to the Godman as that of Christ's body. The divine dignity received by the most holy humanity of Christ through its personal union with the Word of God, is reflected upon all the members of the human race in the order of grace. We are spiritually reborn from the marriage of the Word of God with humanity. Even as the humanity assumed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin is the true Body of the Divine Logos, so mankind, reborn through grace, is the mystic Body of the only-begotten Son of God, and this Body is not dead, but a living organism consisting of innumerable cells. The saints build up the Body of Jesus Christ (Eph. IV, 12); as the body is one, yet has many members, so it is with the Body of Christ (1 Cor. XII, 12; cfr. Rom. XII, 5). But Christ is also the Head of this mysterious Body, because He is the life-giving, unifying, and ruling principle of the Church and of individual souls. "He hath . . . made him head over all the church, which is his body, and the fulness of him who is filled all in all." (Eph. I, 22 sq.).

Even as Adam was the head of a new humanity, and we are his members, so Christ, too, is the Head of a new humanity, and we are *His* members as truly as we are Adam's. Here the Apostle's sublime exposition resembles that of the Divine Master, when He calls Himself the vine and us the branches which He fills with life. The great, ultimate purpose of the

Incarnation was that humanity, corrupted in its head and members by original sin, should be given a new head, and through it, a new supernatural youth in the divine life of grace. "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? . . . But he who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." (1 Cor. VI, 15, 17).

Finally, St. Paul looks upon the sublime Personality of the Godman as the great gift of grace which God has bestowed upon the poor human race. Speaking of the advent of the Saviour into this world, he says: "The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men." (Tit. II, 11). Hence also he briefly calls the Gospel of Jesus Christ the joyful message of the grace of God (Acts XX, 24), and again he says, that through the Redeemer the grace of God has abounded unto many (Rom. V, 15). Thus the sacred humanity of Jesus forms the tender bond which unites creature and Creator, earth and Heaven, nature and the supernatural; so that the words of the prophet are fulfilled in a higher sense: "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love." (Osee, XI, 4). When the Apostle speaks of Emmanuel, the great mystery of God and the mystery of his own heart, his thoughts soar aloft as on eagle's wings and bear us along with irresistible force. He departs from his usual style; his words are a hymn of praise, an outpouring of his loving heart: "Evidently great

is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory." (1 Tim. III, 16).

In the soul of St. Paul devotion to the Lord rises to the most profound mysticism; more than all else it seems to be a devotion of *illumined love.* Faith in Christ and love of Christ he regards as inseparable; for faith without love leaves the heart cold and dead, while, on the other hand, love without faith leads us astray. Hence his greatest anxiety as shepherd of souls is that in the souls entrusted to his care faith and love should become more and more deeply rooted; for this reason he prays to the Father of Our Lord Jesus,—the Father of the whole family in Heaven and on earth,—to grant from the wealth of His glory that they may be strengthened inwardly by His Spirit; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith and that through love they may perceive with all the saints what is the length and breadth, the height and depth of the charity of God, which surpasseth all knowledge, that they may be filled unto the fullness of God (cfr. Eph. III, 14–17.) To St. Paul Christ is the content and the substance of all understanding. The light of natural knowledge pales, all earthly beauty vanishes before the wealth of the glory of Christ. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out

of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus." (2 Cor. IV, 6). With every new perception the Christian's love for Jesus increases, and with love his knowledge increases and reveals to him new and wonderful worlds in the kingdom of Christ's love, which is beyond the power of man to describe.

The Apostle sinks beneath the weight of rapture which he experiences at the most Holy Name of Jesus, and his intense feelings are vented in praise of the Son of the Virgin.

St. Paul's mystical love of Christ is revealed in an undivided affection. During his missionary journeys he had seen much that was beautiful, much that attracted him in the ancient cities of culture, in Rome with its glorious sights and treasures; the pagan festivities and Isthmian games of Greece, the delightful contests in sports and intellectual achievements in Athens and Corinth; but all the beauty and splendor of the world were as nothing compared with the grace that had come to him through Christ Jesus. "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. III, 8). He knows that his heart is free from undue attachment to earthly things; and because his soul, like

an empty vessel, is stripped of the creatural, it is shaped to God's likeness not only in substance, as in the case of other Christians, but also in its activity. God reveals Himself to His faithful servant and allows a ray of His divine light to penetrate the depths of the Apostle's soul, raising him up to the heights of a sublime, mystic contemplation, and permitting him for a short time to taste the bliss of Paradise. "I know a man in Christ . . . (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth) such a one caught up to the third heaven; . . . that he was caught up into Paradise and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter." (2 Cor. XII, 2, 4).

Yet, notwithstanding such great privileges, how humble is the favored Apostle! For fourteen years he carries the sweet secret in his heart, before he reveals this proof of extraordinary divine favor, and he reveals it now only because he is compelled to do so by exterior circumstances. "I have become foolish, you have compelled me," is his reprimand at the end. (2 Cor. XII, 11). It is not his desire to boast of his privileges, but rather to speak of his frailties, that none may consider him better than he is. Lest the salvation of his soul be endangered through spiritual pride, he has been given "a sting of the flesh," by which he is again and again reminded of his weakness and of the help he receives from above. He re-

joices in his infirmities and in the calumnies and the oppressions which he has to suffer for Christ's sake; for when he feels that he is weak, he is in truth strong. He knows that he has received wonderful favors—his vocation and conversion, the gift of contemplation and Apostolic successes; but in all these privileges he humbly beholds the merciful hand of his Saviour and he never wearies of expressing his acknowledgment of and gratitude for God's goodness towards him in the disposition and direction of his life.

This deep humility renders his love of Christ a *consuming sacrificial love.* When the Lord in His wonderful way called Paul to the apostleship, He put on his work the stamp of suffering: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts IX, 16). It may be that the Divine Master led His disciple to these heights of contemplation and celestial ecstasy in order to prepare and arm him for a most fervent communion of suffering with Himself. And like a giant St. Paul set forth exulting on the royal road of the Cross. In the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians he gives a dramatic account of all he suffered in body and soul through persecution and imprisonment. He wants to know Christ only as the crucified one (1 Cor. II, 2), he is nailed to the cross with Him in spirit (Gal. II, 19). In these two texts are revealed the full height of his tender love for Christ and the utmost depth of

an intense mysticism of suffering. To him the world estranged from God lies shattered at the foot of the Cross: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. VI, 14).

The truth of the Cross forms the central idea of his Apostolic preaching. He writes this text upon the hearts of the pagans and Jews newly converted to Christianity as the first axiom, the first paragraph of the constitution of the kingdom of God's grace; and in his last profound epistles, which he sends to his faithful flock from the prison, where he is kept in bonds and chains like a criminal, he can write of nothing more sublime than the communion of peace with his Lord, in which alone he sees his own communion of glory with Christ;—*configuratus morti eius* (Phil. III, 10), to be conformable to his Master in suffering and death is to him the most sacred aim of his expiring life, because he sees rising out of a close following of the cross an indescribable communion of glory with the transfigured Christ on the right hand of God. "If we be dead with him, we shall live also with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. II, 11 sq.). He seldom speaks of the ignominious death of the Saviour on the cross without directly associating with it the glory of Heaven; for, not the mournful sight of the cross on Golgotha, but the joyous light of the Easter sun, with

the hope of seeing God for all eternity, forms the most powerful motive for a great, self-immolating love of Christ.

As the great fire in the furnace can no longer be confined within the narrow walls of its prison, but breaks forth through the chimney in mighty flames, even so the Apostle's ardent love of Christ forces its way to God through the narrow confines of space and time. He wishes to break the chains of sensuality, to abolish the abode of corporeality; he wants to be free, that he may be with Christ. One thing only checks his desire to die,—the consciousness of the duty imposed on him by his apostleship. "For to me, to live is Christ: and to die is gain. And if to live in the flesh, this is to me the fruit of labor, and what I shall choose I know not. But I am straightened between two: having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better. But to abide still in the flesh, is needful for you." (Phil. I, 21–24).

To plant and cultivate in the hearts of his flock this communion of grace with Christ is the highest aim of the Apostle. Hence his constant exhortation to his spiritual children to put on Christ, to grow unto Him, to take Him as a model in their lives. In his Epistle to the Galatians he speaks the affectionate language of an anxious mother to her children: "My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. IV, 19). His anxiety

will not cease until they have attained to the maturity of the Christian life, to the final reward of striving after virtue, to the mystic union with Christ, when it will no longer be they who live, but Christ Himself who will live in them through the closest communion of grace in a holy love.

§ 4

New Life in the Holy Ghost

Divine life flows into the creature in two great streams: through the mystery of the Incarnation the inexhaustible, divine fullness of grace flows out of the bosom of the Trinity into the Sacred Humanity of Christ; from the Sacred Humanity of the Redeemer as the Head of a new body, it flows into the hearts of the justified, raising them to the sublime position of children of God. Thus the process of justification through the Sacraments of the Church is fundamentally but the continuation through time and space of the Sacrament of the Incarnation. The Source and the Cause of this stream of grace, the vicar as it were, of the Saviour who has ascended into Heaven, is the third Person of the Divine Trinity, the Holy Ghost, whom the Church in the Credo beautifully names "Lord and Life-giver" because He brings a new, spiritual spring to souls. St. Paul, the troubadour of the Holy Ghost, describes more forcibly and

expressively than any other hagiographer, the nature and working of the Holy Ghost and His intimate relationship to the Christian heart, and His mysterious, divine operation in the sanctuary of the human soul. He regards the third Person of the Blessed Trinity as *the Sweet Guest,* no less than *the Great Reformer, of the soul.*

We should have but a slight idea of the dignity of a child of God if we were to view it only in the external imparting of grace and see in man's tender and intimate relations to the Holy Ghost only the exterior harmony of thoughts and desires. The Holy Ghost is not only the Author of graces and the Fountainhead of the new, divine life in us; He has, by His gifts, descended personally into the redeemed soul, as the Apostle expressly tells us: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Rom. II, 5). Thus, not only the charity of God, but also the Divine Cause of this charity, is bestowed on us, as a force that penetrates the very substance of the soul, rendering it fruitful; hence the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians: "Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit." (Eph. V, 18).

True, the Holy Ghost is, by virtue of His immensity and omnipresence, always present in the soul of man and, by His all-conserving omnipotence, always active in it; but this activity is a purely natural one, because it occurs in the natural order and has for its

aim purely natural effects. In the soul that has received grace, however, the Holy Ghost works in a way hitherto unknown. And since the Holy Ghost is given to the soul as a new foundation and new form of life, He is active therein not only in a passing, but in a lasting way. For this reason St. Paul, when speaking of the Presence of the Holy Ghost, intentionally chooses the expression "dwell," in order to convey the idea of a lasting state: "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. III, 16). "But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. VIII, 9). "Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us." (2 Tim. I, 14).

This personal Presence of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the just is the logical effect of sanctifying grace. Since the divine life of grace consists in a supernatural uplifting of the human faculties of knowledge and love, so as to enable man to behold God hereafter,—if his filial relationship to God is truly a living one, it must be possible to conceive of God as personally present in the soul through grace already here on earth. Further, according to the express teaching of the Church, a person who is in the state of grace is a friend of God. Now, if a true and lasting friendship between men is not easily conceivable without bodily presence and if, without

this presence, it suffers, or at least grows cold with time, then indeed the Christian possesses an unmistakable claim on the real Presence of God; so that theologians say, if God were not present in the soul of the just by virtue of His omnipresence, He must be present therein for the reason that the soul has a legal claim on His presence through sanctifying grace.

This indwelling of God in the human soul is ascribed primarily to the Holy Ghost. In the inner life of the Blessed Trinity He is the holy stream of love that circulates between the Father and the Son for all eternity; He is, as it were, their very heartbeat, aflame with an unending tenderness; He is, according to St. Bernard, the kiss and embrace of the Father and the Son. (*Serm. in Cant.*, V). Since sanctifying grace, as the foundation of the divine life in us, is, on the one hand, the effect and proof of the most fervent and incomprehensible divine love, and since, on the other hand, it is expressed chiefly by charity, grace clearly bears a very special relation to the Third Divine Person as the Author and Bearer of supernatural love. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Rom. V, 5).

Two views are to be excluded here as leading to heresy. Above all the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul must not be understood to mean that the

Holy Ghost becomes essentially one with the soul. Such a life union between creature and Creator in one person took place only at the Incarnation of the Son of God; and we know that even the blessed in Heaven can be united with the three Divine Persons only through the Light of Glory. Secondly, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul may not be conceived as separate and apart from the two other Divine Persons. As we have seen, the Apostle in another place says that the Son of God is born and assumes shape in us; and our Divine Saviour Himself says: "If any one love me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him." (John XIV, 23). In the Personal Presence of the Holy Ghost in us through grace, we see the true, exalted dignity of the Christian securely anchored and transfigured to the highest degree. Its possession forms the blossom and the crown of the justified soul. This profound truth caused the friends of God to tremble with joy at such an immense favor,—from the first Christians, who, in their consciousness of this dignity, called themselves *theophoroi*, that is, bearers of God, in contradistinction to the pagans, up to Father Meschler, the writer of that magnificent work, "The Gift of Pentecost"; and again, from Leonidas, the father of Origen, who lived in the second century and possessed such strong faith that he arose in the night

to kiss the breast of his little son because he saw in him the living temple of the Holy Ghost, up to Dr. M. Scheeben, whose profound speculations strive to secure for the Holy Ghost His proper place in the faith and life of to-day. Following in the footsteps of St. Paul, St. Augustine worships the mystery of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul; while St. Chrysostom calls it a miracle greater than Josue's power over the Sun. (*In Hebr.*, XXVII, 4). St. Bernard and Albert the Great were the first of the mystics to whom this sublime doctrine became a flood of light, which revealed to them an entirely new, supernatural world of knowledge and faith, and a salutary spring from which they imbibed a life and an aim.

The Apostle leaves us in no doubt regarding the coming to us of the Holy Ghost and the duration of His indwelling. According to him the spiritual life can be both intensified and diminished. When, on his third missionary journey, Paul came to Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor, he met certain disciples, who had received the faith and the baptism of St. John. Upon asking them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, he was told, to his surprise, that they had not even heard there was a Holy Ghost. He instructed them, administered valid Christian baptism to them, laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, spoke in divers tongues and prophesied.

(Acts XIX, 2–6). The sad ignorance which the Apostle had found in these "believing disciples" probably caused him to speak repeatedly of the Holy Ghost in his short Epistle to the people of Ephesus. Thus he exhorts them: "Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit." (Eph. V, 18). And he implores them not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God," whereby they were "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. IV, 30),—a text that shows us more clearly than any other how personal and intimate St. Paul regarded the relations of the Third Divine Person to the soul in the state of grace. He looks upon voluntary venial sin as a grave offence against the Majesty of God, who has shown us such infinite love;—not to speak of mortal sin, which is a complete estrangement from God, and utterly destroys the tender operation of the Sweet Guest of the soul and extinguishes the celestial flame of divine love. Hence his earnest warning to the Thessalonians not to extinguish the Spirit (1 Thess. V, 19). True, the Holy Ghost is not literally driven out of the soul by grievous sin, since by His omnipresence He penetrates and fills the soul in a natural way; but the light of His grace is extinguished. It is like a person wanting to exclude from his house the light of day by covering the windows with heavy shutters, so that there is only darkness within. The sun continues to shine; it is only the will of the inhabitant that prevents its light and

warmth from entering within. St. Paul speaks of extinguishing the Spirit of God in the soul. This rebellion against the Holy Ghost by mortal sin is in his eyes a crime so accursed that he places it on a level with the crucifixion of the Son of God. In his Epistle to the Hebrews he speaks of the sin of a renegade, who had been "illuminated" (by baptism) and had enjoyed the celestial gift (in the Blessed Eucharist) and been "made partaker of the Holy Ghost," yet had "fallen away," thus "crucifying again . . . the Son of God, and making him a mockery." (Hebr. VI, 4, 6). In another chapter of the same Epistle we read: "A man making void the law of Moses, dieth without any mercy under two or three witnesses; how much more do you think he deserveth worse punishments who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, by which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace?" (Hebr. X, 28 sq.). He proceeds to point out the awful consequences of such criminal conduct, which only God can judge and avenge. "For we know him that hath said: 'Vengeance belongeth to me, and I will repay.' . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebr. X, 30). Hence his warning to the Corinthians, "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of

God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." (1 Cor. III, 16 sq.). That a child of God should commit a mortal sin, the Apostle regards as a *mysterium iniquitatis*, a mystery of wickedness (2 Thes. II, 7), which he cannot understand. If grace raises man to regions of light, where he is permitted to behold the divine splendor, to describe which words fail; grievous sin compels him to descend into an abyss of awful darkness. He sees the most tender ties of love between Creator and creature rudely torn to pieces, the sublime sanctuary of the temple of grace in the soul desecrated and destroyed, the mystery of divine grace swallowed in the mystery of human wickedness.

. . . . . .

The indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul forms the foundation of a supernatural tendency of the Spirit. *The Holy Ghost is the Great Reformer of souls.* Ezechiel compared Him to "cleansing water" and promised in the name of God the Father: "I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and I will cleanse you from all your idols, and I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in my commandments, and to keep my judgments, and

do them. . . . You shall be my people, and I will be your God." (Ezechiel XXXVI, 25–28). The process of the sanctification of the *intellect* takes place primarily by means of a humble, trusting faith. Under the sway of the Holy Ghost the heart becomes receptive for the seeds of faith; ideas and impulses are stirred up, which draw man gradually away from the material world and bring him closer to Heaven; for the doctrine of Christianity ultimately resolves itself into a mystery, which nature cannot penetrate; Christianity in fact is a religion of mysteries. "We speak of the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew. . . . But to us God hath revealed them, by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. II, 7–11). It is an incomparably beautiful chapter in which the simple tent-maker of Tarsus displays to the cultured Greeks a knowledge inspired by the Holy Ghost, that soars high above the speculation and sophistry of the flourishing schools of Greek philosophy.

Not only does the Divine Teacher, the Holy Ghost, present to the thinking mind inexpressibly mysterious

matter for thought; He also bestows the power lovingly to understand, in humble faith, the sublime subject of knowledge. In the profound words of St. Augustine, man receives from the Holy Ghost "not only what he sees, but also, that he may see" (*"non solum id, quod videt, sed etiam ut videat." Conf.*, I, 7, c. 21, n. 27). The Holy Ghost renders the heart sympathetic towards the subject of revelation and in this way creates in the workshop of the soul a sounding-board attuned to the divine truth. It is for this reason, ultimately, that the life of the just man can be rightly valued only by such as are of his own way of thinking: "Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God. . . . But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged rightly of no man." (1 Cor. II, 12–15). Here the Apostle draws a sharp contrast between one who, being without the Holy Ghost, aims only at the sensual and the material, and the just man, who bears within himself the Spirit of God and whose heart is opened to the kingdom of the supernatural. The child of God, even though he may lack material advantages, stands on an infinitely higher plane than the one who, while he may possess

all the gifts of mind and body, yet is without the divine life of grace. The Apostle concludes this profound chapter by a grateful reference to the unfathomable mystery of God: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. II, 16).

Together with this new orientation of knowledge, the *will* is reformed through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; from the land where it is held in slavery by the sinful passions, it is led to the Promised Land of true moral freedom; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. III, 17). And when the Divine Physician has succeeded in planting the seed of a new life in a well-disposed heart, the process of spiritual healing makes rapid progress. "For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (Rom. VIII, 14, 13). "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. . . . But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." (Gal. V, 16, 18). True, the supernatural communion with God through grace is not equivalent to the striving after ethical perfection; otherwise noble pagans would possess justification. The life of grace can exist in the soul without asceticism, as is the case with children not yet come to the use of reason. If we con-

sider the life of grace and asceticism in their true relation to each other, we find that asceticism occupies a subordinate position; it is a means to an end, that is, the means by which we receive the divine life and by which the divine life increases in us. For, since this life must be lived within the limitations of our natural powers, and since we tend to use the faculties with which we are endowed by nature for material ends that alienate us from God, it follows as a matter of course that these faculties must first be fitted for their higher, supernatural functions by asceticism; that is, they must be trained in striving after ethical perfection, which is the work of the human will no less than of the grace of the Holy Ghost.

But when the disgraceful chains of slavery, the chains of low desires, are broken, and the soul has soared into the higher realm of moral freedom, then the Divine Master takes the human will into His holy school and imprints a new spiritual character on the whole exterior conduct of life. First He awakens in His docile pupil an ardent *love of God.* The same Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and embraces them both in the indescribable kiss and golden stream of infinite love; the self-same Holy Ghost to whom on this account the Church has given the name "Charity," is the bond of love which unites God and the soul. Man by nature is neither worthy nor able to enter into this intimate union with

God. Before becoming the bride of the Son of God, the soul must first be ennobled by implanting in it the supernatural life; then only is it prepared to receive, through the Holy Ghost, that higher love, alone worthy of God, by which it can appear before the Heavenly Father as His child and before the Eternal Word as His bride. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Rom. V, 5). In this charity of the Holy Ghost, nobler because supernatural, the Christian finds the cardinal point of his spiritual striving. Hence the Apostle in his ardor pours forth that inimitable canticle of love in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. XIII, 1–3). Charity in the Holy Ghost is the queen of all virtues. "And now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Cor. XIII, 13). Charity is the root and foundation of a virtuous life and for this reason St. Paul wishes that

his Ephesians should be "rooted and founded in charity." (Eph. III, 17). Charity is the form and stimulus of all spiritual striving; therefore he writes to the Galatians that "in Christ Jesus only availeth faith that worketh by charity." (Gal. V, 6). Finally, charity is the goal and crown of all religion; therefore he instructs his disciple Timothy, that "the end of the commandment is charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith." (1 Tim. I, 5).

Through the power of supernatural charity the Holy Ghost draws the soul within the circle of the divine life. This charity has its origin in Heaven and leads back to Heaven; in this way it may be said to be the golden ring that encircles the Creator and the creature. It is not we who first loved God, but the reverse. And he who remains in charity, remains in God, and God in him. This love for the Holy Ghost has drawn from the souls of God's friends a music like the music of Æolian harps from another world; whether a St. Bernard, a Suso, a St. Bonaventure or a Thomas à Kempis extolled it in words as the purest and highest of all earthly goods; or whether the mystics concentrated their sentiments on the one word, charity, as in the case of St. Augustine: "O my God! Thou are God and thou art mine!" or in the rich, full love of the Seraphic Beggar of As-

sisi: "My God and my All! *Amor non amatur:* Eternal Charity is not loved."

Out of this relationship of pure love there blossoms through the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost a most trusting friendship with Him in fervent prayer. The sweet Guest of the soul Himself bears testimony to our being children of God. (Rom. VIII, 16). Now the Holy Ghost takes His trusting children into the true high-school of the inner life. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth; because he asketh for the saints according to God." (Rom. VIII, 26, 27). He is the greatest Master of the life of prayer. As a musician plays upon the strings of his lyre, so He stirs the Christian soul to its uttermost depths, playing upon it as an instrument, awakening in it a desire for God, and stimulating it to prayer. He presents to the heart the proper petitions, so that it may not ask for those things that are opposed to its spiritual welfare; He has arranged the Lord's Prayer so that we do not make the fourth petition first and the first in the fourth place; He ordains that our prayer should not degenerate into mere begging; that adoration, gratitude, and reconciliation should have their place also. He gives us the true

spirit of prayer, making confident intercourse with God a joyful necessity, so that we are forced to go to the Father of Light as the babe presses close to the heart of its mother. Finally, He bestows on us the right disposition for prayer, inner peace and unction, making the heart feel that it is at home with God. The Holy Ghost gives these chosen ones a quite special and extraordinary grace by which the deep springs of the soul are opened up and flow towards God in a higher form of intercourse: "Yet by the Spirit he speaketh mysteries." (1 Cor. XIV, 2).

To sum up, the whole interior life of the Christian is to such an extent the work of the Holy Ghost that without Him we cannot so much as utter the ejaculation, "Lord Jesus!" (1 Cor. XII, 3).

And as He entrusts the Church with the ministry of divine truth and works in the priesthood as the invisible Regent of the Church, so that the Holy Ghost has appointed bishops as the shepherds of the Church, as the Apostle tells us, and the priests should exhibit themselves as "the ministers of God, in the Holy Ghost" (2 Cor. VI, 6), and as every blessing and every sacrifice made is His doing, so that the Church stands "an habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. II, 22); thus He governs and fructifies the Paradise of the Church with the richest and most manifold forms of liturgical and private prayer, so that a road to

God is offered to every kind of character, to every mood, and to every need.

In the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul tells of the fruits of the Holy Ghost in the soul, after he had first painted the dark picture of the works of the flesh. He places charity at the head of all gifts and following upon this virtue, "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,"—the peace that the world cannot give and that "surpasses all understanding" (Phil. IV, 7), that inner peace of the heart which renders man happy in the possession of a good conscience and enables him to rise above all the terrors of the world; that peace which the Apostle would have triumph in the Christian soul (2 Col. III, 15). This calmness of heart which the ancient mystics so happily named "mâze," through the grace of the Holy Ghost becomes inexpressible joy. Before ascending to His Father, the Divine Master had promised His disciples that their sorrow should be turned into joy. This fountain of joy began to flow at Pentecost with the coming of the heavenly Consoler, and since that time it has not ceased to flow wherever a heart was found that gave itself unreservedly to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The spring of this spiritual joy has never yet been exhausted, not even under the heat of the most agonising suffering, beginning with St. Stephen in the first century, about whom it is so beau-

tifully said in the office of the Church, that the stones became sweet to him; up to St. Sophie Barat in the 20th century, who said so touchingly that not all the flowers in the world held so much honey as the gall and vinegar of the dying Redeemer in the Holy Ghost. It is remarkable that St. Paul associates this peace and joy of the soul with the Holy Ghost: "The kingdom of God is . . . justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. XIV, 17). "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. XV, 13). He praises the Thessalonians because they received "the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. I, 6).

The Holy Ghost bestows on the soul which He has taken unto Himself the precious adornment of His *seven gifts.* The most valuable jewel in this bridal crown is the gift of *wisdom,* which in the fervent Middle Ages was looked upon, next to the divine virtues, as the most precious of all graces, because it comprises in a higher synthesis the three infused virtues, and because it is the only soil on which the spiritual life can thrive. The sublime gift of wisdom does not, like the gift of knowledge, consist in a one-sided enlightenment of the understanding, but, as the Latin root *sapere* (= to taste) shows, in a quickening of the will and a stimulation of all the powers of

the soul, so that the whole heart becomes filled with a strong love of God and His interests. The soul is gradually drawn away from the deceitful pleasures of the world, led home to the world of grace, and peacefully settled there. St. Thomas of Aquin describes this gift in the expressive words, "*cognitio Dei affectiva et experimentalis*"—an inner experimental perception of God to which the loving heart attains. (2a 2ae, qu. 97, art. II, ad 2). Thus the man endowed with this spiritual gift reaches the state of the *spiritualis homo*, of whom St. Paul speaks so often in contradistinction to the *carnalis homo*, the carnal man, who lives according to his lower instincts; and in contradistinction also to the *animalis homo*, the man of the world, who measures all things by the natural standard of the senses. (1 Cor. III, 1; II, 14; 2 Cor. I, 12; VII, 14). Therefore St. Paul describes as spiritual (πνευματικός) the man who lives, not according to his spiritual nature, but who, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, participates in the spiritual nature of God, who lives by the Spirit of God, is urged and lifted up by Him. "Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God. Which things also we speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom; but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are

of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined." (1 Cor. II, 12, 13, 14). At this stage there is for St. Paul, who is urged on by the love of Christ, no standing still, no loitering by the way.

> "As by sense
> Of new delight, the man who perseveres
> In good deeds, doth perceive from day to day
> His virtue growing."
>
> (Dante, *Paradiso*, XVIII, 52–5, Cary's tr.)

Hence this continual strengthening and growth of the inner man is his ardent desire and constant prayer for himself, for his fellow-workers, and for the flock entrusted to his care. We can see this from the conclusion of his epistles, but more especially from the fervent prayer quoted in the third chapter of the Letter to the Ephesians. On his knees he prays God that by the grace of the Holy Ghost they should be interiorly strengthened. This constant progress in spiritual striving he considers to be the most important concern of the apostle and the shepherd, the highest aim and most glorious crown of his labors, because through it is reached the spiritual, that is, the divine, life on earth.

THE END

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